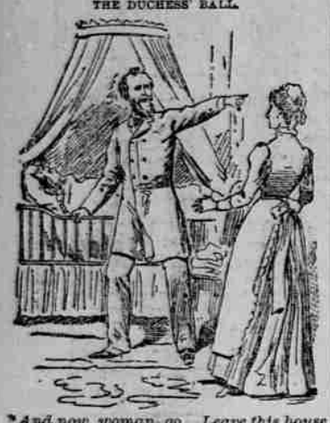
"BEATRICE."

A New and Fascinating Story.

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DUCHESS' BALL.



"And now, woman, go. Leave this house at once!"

Geoffrey reached town a little before 11 o'clock that night, a haunted man—haunted for life by a vision of that face, still lovely in death, floating alone upon the deep, and companioned only by the screaming mews, or perchance now sinking or sunk to an unfathomable grave. Well might such a vision haunt a man, the man whom alone of all men those cold lips had kissed, and for whose dear sake this dreadful thing was done.

He took a cab, directing the driver to go to Bolton street and to stop at his club as he passed. There might be letters for him there, he thought—something which would distract his mind a little. As it chanced, there was a letter marked "private," and a telegram; both had been delivered that evening, the porter said, the former about an hour ago by hand.

Idly he opened the telegram—it was from his lawyers.

"Your cousin, the child George Bingham, is, as we have just heard, dead. Please call on us early to-morrow morning."

He started a little, for this meant a good deal to Geoffrey. It meant a baronetcy and eight thousand a year, more or less. How delighted Honoria would be, he thought, with a sad smile; the loss of that large income had always been a bitter pill to her, and one which she had made him swallow again and again. Well, there it was. Poor boy! he had always been ailing—an old man's child!

He put the telegram in his pocket and got into the hansom again. There was a lamp in it, and by its light he read the letter. It was from the prime minister, and ran thus:

"MY DEAR BINGHAM—I have not seen you since Monday to thank you for the magnificent speech you made on that night. Allow me to add my congratulations to those of everybody else. As you know, the under secretaryship of the home office is vacant. On behalf of my colleagues and myself I write to ask if you will consent to fill it for a time. I say for a time, for we do not in any way consider that the post is one commensurate with your abilities. It will, however, serve to give you practical experience of administration, and us the advantage of your great talents to an even larger extent than we now enjoy. For the future, it must of course take care of itself; but, as you know, Sir ——'s health is not all that could be desired, and the other day he told me that it was doubtful if he would be able to carry on the duties of the attorney generalship for very much longer. In view of this contingency I venture to suggest that you would do well to apply for silk as soon as possible. I have spoken to the lord chancellor about it, and he says that there will be no difficulty, as, although you have only been in active practice for so short a time, you have a good many years' standing as a barrister. Or if this prospect does not please, doubtless some other opening to the cabinet can be found in time. The fact is that we cannot in our own interest overlook you for long."

Geoffrey smiled again as he finished this letter. Who could have believed a year ago that he would have been today in a position to receive such an epistle from the prime minister of England? Ah, here was the luck of the drowned one's shoe with a vengeance! And what was it all worth to him now?

He put the letter in his pocket with the telegram, and looked out. They were turning into Bolton street. How was little Effie? he wondered. The child seemed all that was left him to care for. If anything happened to her—bah! he would not think of it.

He was there now. "How is Miss Effie?" he asked of the servant who opened the door. At that moment his attention was attracted by the dim forms of two people, a man and a woman, who were standing not far from the area gate, the man with his arm round the woman's waist. Suddenly the woman appeared to catch sight of the cab and retired swiftly down the area. It crossed his mind that her figure was very like that of Anne, the French nurse.

"Miss Effie is doing nicely, sir, I am told," answered the man.

Geoffrey breathed more freely. "Where is her ladyship," he asked; "in Miss Effie's room?"

"No, sir," answered the man; "her ladyship has gone to a ball. She left this note for you in case you should come in."

He took the note from the hall table and opened it.

"DEAR GEOFFREY," it ran. "Effie is so much better that I have made up my mind to go to the duchess' ball after all. She would be so disappointed if I did not come and my dress is quite lovely. Had your mysterious business anything to do with Bryngelly?

"Yours, HONORIA."

"She would go on to a ball from her mother's funeral," said Geoffrey to himself, as he walked up to Effie's room. "Well, it is her nature, and there's an end of it."

He knocked at the door of Effie's room. There was no answer, so he walked in. The room was lighted, but empty—no, not quite! On the floor, clothed only in her white night shirt, lay his little daughter, to all appearance dead.

With something like an oath he sprang to her and lifted her. The face was pale, and the small hands were cold, but the breast was still hot and fevered, and the heart beat. A glance showed him what had happened. The child, being left alone, and feeling thirsty, had got out of bed and gone to the water bottle—there was the tumbler on the floor. Then weakness had overcome her and she had fainted—fainted upon the cold floor with the inflammation still on her.

At that moment Anne entered the room, sweetly murmuring, "Ca va bien, cherie?"

"Help me to put the child into bed," said Geoffrey, sternly. "Now ring the bell—ring it again!"

"And now, woman, go! Leave this house at once—this very night. Do you hear me? No, don't stop to argue. Look here! If that child dies I will prosecute you for manslaughter; yes, I saw you in the street," and he took a step toward her. Then Anne fled, and her face was seen no more in Bolton street, or indeed in this country.

"James," said Geoffrey to the servant, "send the cook up here—she is a sensible woman! and do you take a hansom and drive to the doctor, and tell him to come here at once, and if you can not find him go for another doctor. Then go to the nurse's home, near St. James' station, and get a trained nurse; tell them one must be had from somewhere instantly."

"Yes, sir. And shall I call for her ladyship at the duchess', sir?"

"No," he answered, frowning heavily; "do not disturb her ladyship. Go now."

"That settles it," said Geoffrey, as the man went. "Whatever happens, Honoria and I must part. I have done with her."

He had, indeed, though not in the way he meant. It would have been well for Honoria if her husband's contempt had not prevented him from summoning her from her pleasure.

The cook came up, and between them brought the child back to life.

She opened her eyes and smiled. "Is that you, daddy," she whispered, "or do I dreams?"

"Yes, dear, it is I."

"Where has you been, daddy—to see Aunt Beatrice?"

"Yes, love," he said, with a gasp.

"Oh, daddy, my head do feel funny; but I don't mind now you is come back. You won't go away no more, will you, daddy?"

"No, dear, no more."

After that she began to wander a little, and finally dropped into a troubled sleep.

Within half an hour both the doctor and the nurse arrived. The former listened to Geoffrey's tale, and examined the child.

"She may pull through it," he said; "she has got a capital constitution; but I'll tell you what it is—if she had lain another minute in that draught there would have been an end of her. You came in the nick of time. And now, if I were you, I should go to bed. You can do no good here, and you look dreadfully ill yourself."

But Geoffrey shook his head. He said he would go downstairs and smoke a pipe. He did not want to go to bed at present; he was too tired.

Meanwhile the ball went on merrily. Lady Honoria never enjoyed herself more in her life. She reveled in the luxurious gayety around her like a butterfly in the sunshine. How good it all was—the flash of diamonds, the odor of costly flowers, the homage of well bred men, the envy of other women! Oh, it was a delightful world after all—that is, when one did not have to exist in a flat near the Edgeware road. But, heaven be praised! thanks to Geoffrey's talents, there was an end of flats and misery. After all, he was not a bad sort of husband, though in many ways a perfect mystery to her. As for his little weakness for the Welsh girl, really, provided that there was no scandal, she did not care twopence about it.

"Yes, I am so glad you admire it. I think it is rather a nice dress, but then I always say that nobody in London can make a dress like Mme. Jules. Oh, no, Geoffrey did not choose it; he thinks of other things."

"Well, I'm sure you ought to be proud of him, Lady Honoria," said the handsome guardsman to whom she was talking; "they say at mess that he is one of the cleverest men in England. I only wish I had a fiftieth part of his brains."

"Oh, please do not become clever, Lord Ateligh; please don't, or I shall really give you up. Cleverness is all very well, but it isn't everything, you know. Yes, I will dance, if you like, but you must go slowly; to be quite honest, I am afraid of tearing my lace in this crush. Why, I declare, there is Garsington—my brother, you know;" and she pointed to a small, red haired man who was elbowing his way toward them. "I wonder what he wants? It is not at all in his line to come to balls. You know him, don't you? He is always racing horses, like you."

But the guardsman had vanished. For reasons of his own he did not wish to meet Garsington. Perhaps he, too, had been a member of a certain club.

"Oh, there you are, Honoria," said her brother. "I thought I should be sure to find you somewhere in this beastly squash. Look here, I have something to tell you."

"Good news or bad?" said Lady Honoria, playing with her fan. "If it is bad, keep it, for I am enjoying myself very much, and I don't want my evening spoiled."

"Trust you for that, Honoria; but look here, it's jolly good; about as good as can be for that prig of a husband of yours. What do you think? That brat of a boy, the son of old Sir Robert Bingham and the cook or some one, you know, is"——

"Not dead—not dead?" said Honoria, in deep agitation.

"Dead as ditch water," replied his lordship. "I heard it at the club. There was a lawyer fellow dining with somebody there, and they got talking about Bingham, when the lawyer said: 'Oh, he's Sir Geoffrey Bingham now. Old Sir Robert's heir is dead. I saw the telegram myself.'"

"Oh, this is almost too good to be true," said Honoria. "Why, it means eight thousand a year to us."

"I told you it was pretty good," said her brother. "You ought to stand me a commission out of the swag. At any rate, let's go and drink to the news. Come on, it's time for supper, and I'm awfully done. I must screw myself up."

Lady Honoria took his arm. As they walked down the wide, flower hung stair they met a very great person indeed coming up.

"Ah, Lady Honoria," said the great person, "I have something to say that will please you, I think;" and he bent toward her, and spoke very low, then, with a little bow, passed on.

"What is the old boy talking about?" asked her brother.

"Why, what do you think? We are in luck's way to-night. He says that they are offering Geoffrey the under secretaryship of the home office."

"He'll be a bigger prig than ever now," growled Lord Garsington. "Yes, it is luck, though; let us hope it won't turn."

They sat down to supper, and Lord Garsington, who had already been dining, helped himself pretty freely to champagne. Before them was a silver candelabra, and on each of the candles was fixed a little painted paper shade. One of them got wrong, and a footman tried to reach over Lord Garsington's head and put it straight.

"I'll do it," he said.

"No, no; let the man," said Lady Honoria. "Look! it is going to catch fire!"

"Nonsense!" he answered, rising solemnly and reaching his arm toward the shade. As he touched it, it caught fire; indeed, by touching it he caused it to catch fire. He seized hold of it, and made an effort to put it out, but it burned his fingers.

"Curse the thing!" he said aloud, and threw it from him. It fell flaming in his sister's dress among the thickest of the filmy laces; they caught, and instantly two wreathing snakes of fire shot up her. She sprung from her seat and rushed screaming down the room, an awful mass of flame!

In ten more minutes Lady Honoria had left this world and all its pleasures to those who still lived to taste them.

An hour passed—Geoffrey still sat brooding heavily over his pipe in the study in Bolton street, and waiting for Honoria, when a knock came to his door. The servants had gone to bed, all except the sick nurse. He rose and opened it himself. A little, red haired, pale faced man staggered in.

"What! Garsington, is it you? What do you want at this hour?"

"Screw yourself up, Bingham; I've something to tell you," he answered in a thick voice.

"What is it? Another disaster, I suppose! Is somebody else dead?"

"Yes; somebody is. Honoria's dead. Burned to death at the ball!"

"Great God! Honoria burned to death! I and better go"——

"I advise you not, Bingham. I wouldn't go to the hospital if I were you. Screw yourself up, and if you can give me something to drink— I'm about done— I must screw myself up."

And here we may leave this most fortunate and gifted man. Farewell to Geoffrey Bingham!

ENVOI.

Thus, then, did these human atoms work out their destinies, these little grains of animated dust, blown hither and thither by a breath which came they knew not whence.

If there be any malicious principle, among the powers around us, that deigns to find amusement in the futile vagaries of man, well might it laugh, and laugh again, at the great results of all this scheming, of all these desires, loves and hates; and if there be any pitiful principle, well might it sigh over the infinite pathos of human helplessness. Owen Davies lost in his own passion; Geoffrey crowned with prosperity and haunted by undying sorrow; Honoria perishing wretchedly in her hour of satisfied ambition; Elizabeth gaining her end to lose it in the grave; Beatrice sacrificing herself in love and blindness, and thereby casting out her joy.

Oh, if she had been content to humbly trust in the Providence above her; if she had but left that deed undared for one short week!

But Geoffrey still remained, and the child, after hanging for a while between life and death, recovered, and was left to comfort him. May she survive to be a happy wife and mother, living under conditions more favorable to her well being than those which trampled out the life of that mistaken woman, the ill starred, great souled Beatrice, and broke her father's heart!

Say—what are we? We are but arrows winged with fears, and shot from darkness into darkness; we are blind leaders of the blind, aimless beaters of this wintry air, lost travelers by many stony paths ending in one end. Tell us, you who have outworn the common tragedy and passed the narrow way, what lies beyond its gate? You are dumb, or we cannot hear you speak.

But Beatrice knows today!

THE END.

HE PREFERRED IT.

Why the Third Officer Rode Under the Car Seat.

Three brother officers were traveling from Umritsir to Lahore, where they had been playing polo during the afternoon. One of them, tired after the game, fell asleep on one of the seats. His railway ticket, which was sticking a little out of his pocket, was promptly annexed by one of the others and transferred to his own pocket. When nearing Lahore his brother officers awoke the sleeping youth, saying:

"Now, then, old man! Get up! Here we are!"

It was still broad daylight, and for some reason or other the train was pulled up some little way outside the station.

"All tickets ready, please!" shouted the ticket collector.

Two of our friends promptly found theirs, ready for the ticket collector when he should make his appearance. The third searched this pocket, that pocket, here, everywhere, but could find no ticket.

"Good gracious! where is my ticket?" he said. "I know I had one right enough when I started. You fellows saw me get it, didn't you?" he asked.

"Yes, you had it right enough," they said. "Where on earth can you have put it?"

"I don't know, blessed if I do," he replied in desperation.

"You'll have to pay the fare," said the others consolingly. "It's not much."

"But I haven't a cent with me," he returned. "Will you fellows lend me some dibs?"

Both said they were as high and dry as he was in regard to money.

"Tickets, please," said the collector at last, quite close to the carriage.

"What the dickens shall I do?" said the ticketless one.

"Oh! get under the seat," said the others; "quick! quick, man! here he comes."

Under the seat like a shot went the man without a ticket! When the ticket collector came to the door three tickets were handed up.

"You have given me three tickets, sir," he said; "but I see only two gentlemen; where is the third?"

"Oh! he's under the seat," they said with the greatest nonchalance, as if it were an ordinary every day affair.

"Under the seat!" echoed the ticket collector, in a tone of surprise, "what is he doing there?"

"Oh! he always travels under the seat," they said; "he prefers it!"—Tit-Bits.

Discouraging.

"I don't feel vewy much encouwaged about existence and that soht of thing," said Willie Wishington.

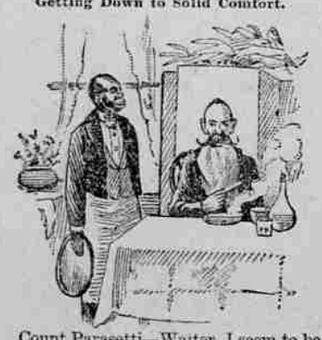
"What's the matter now?" asked his sympathizing friend.

"Why, I went to a bahber yesterday and said, 'I want you to shave me.'"

"And what did he say?"

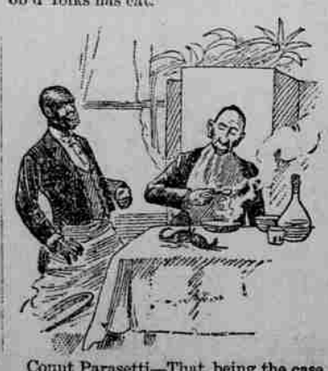
"He said 'certainly; dwop in any time you happen to need it.'"—Washington Post.

Getting Down to Solid Comfort.



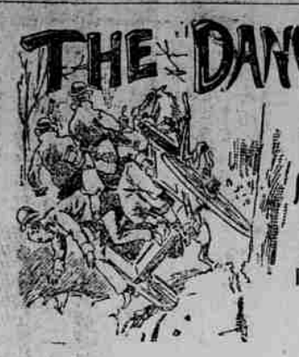
Count Parasetti—Waiter, I seem to be the only one in the dining room.

The Waiter—Yo's raight, boss. D' rest ob d' folks has eat.



Count Parasetti—That being the case, I think that for once I'll enjoy my soup.—Judge.

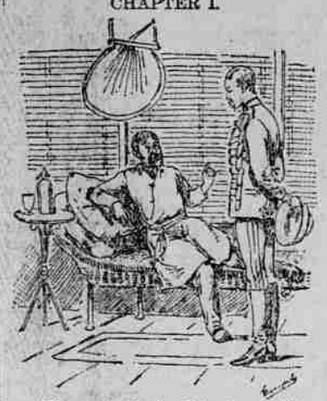
THE DANVERS JEWELS



AN ANONYMOUS NOVEL

In Which is Told a Thrilling Story of Baffled Crime.

CHAPTER I.



"You go to England to-morrow?"

I was on the point of leaving India and returning to England when he sent for me. At least, to be accurate—and I am always accurate—I was not quite on the point, but nearly, for I was going to start by the mail on the following day. I had been up to Government house to take my leave a few days before, but Sir John had been too ill to see me, or at least he had said he was. And now he was much worse—dying, it seemed, from all accounts, and he had sent down a native servant in the noonday heat with a note, written in his shaking old hand, begging me to come up as soon as it became cooler. He said he had a commission which he was anxious I should do for him in England.

Of course I went. It was not very convenient, because I had to borrow one of our fellow's traps, as I had sold my own, and none of them had the confidence in my driving which I had myself. I was also obliged to leave the packing of my collection of Malay krises and Indian kookeries to my bearer.

I wondered, as I drove along, why Sir John had sent for me. Worse, was he? Dying, and without a friend? Poor old man! He had done pretty well in this world, but I was afraid he would not be up to much once he was out of it; and now, it seemed, he was going. I felt sorry for him. I felt more sorry when I saw him—when the tall, long faced A. D. C. took me into his room and left us.

Yes, Sir John was certainly going. There was no mistake about it. It was written in every line of his drawn, fever worn face, and in his wide, fever lit eyes, and in the clutch of his long, yellow hands upon his tussore silk dressing gown. He looked a very sick, bad old man as he lay there on his low couch, placed so as to court the air from without, cooled by its passage through damped grass screens, and to receive the full strength of the punkah, pulled by an invisible hand outside.

"You go to England to-morrow?" he asked, sharply.

It was written even in the change of his voice, which was harsh, as of old, but with all the strength gone out of it.

"By to-morrow's mail," I said. I should have liked to say something more—something sympathetic about his being ill and not likely to get better, but he had always treated me discourteously when he was well, and I could not open out all at once now that he was ill.

"Look here, Middleton," he went on; "I am dying, and I know it. I don't suppose you imagined I had sent for you to bid you a last farewell before departing to my long home. I am not in such a hurry to depart as all that, I can tell you; but there is something I want done—that I want you to do for me. I meant to have done it myself, but I am down now and I must trust somebody. I know better than to trust a clever man. An honest fool—but I am digressing from the case in point. I have never trusted anybody all my life, so you may feel honored. I have a small parcel which I want you to take to England for me. Here it is."

His long, lean hands went searching in his dressing gown, and presently produced an old brown bag, held together at the neck by a string.

"See here," he said; and he pushed the glasses and papers aside from the table near him and undid the string. Then he craned forward to look about him, laying a spasmodic clutch on the bag. "I'm watched! I know I'm watched!" he said in a whisper, his pale eyes turning slowly in their sockets. "I shall be killed for them if I keep them much longer, and I won't be hurried into my grave. I'll take my own time."

"There is no one here," I said, "and no one in sight except Cathcart smoking in the veranda, and I can only see his legs, so he can't see us."

He seemed to recover himself, and laughed. I had never liked his laugh, especially when, as had often happened, it had been directed against myself; but I liked it still less now.

"See here!" he repeated, chuckling; and he turned the bag inside out upon the table.

Such jewels I had never seen. They fell like cut flame upon the marble table, green and red and burning white. A large diamond rolled and fell upon the floor. I picked it up and put it back among the confused blaze of precious stones, too much astonished for a moment to speak.

"Beautiful! aren't they?" the old man chuckled, passing his wasted hands over them. "You won't match that necklace in any jeweler's in England. I tore it off an old she devil of a Rhanee's neck after the mutiny, and got a bite in the arm for my trouble. But she'll tell no tales. He! he! he! I don't mind saying now how I got them. I am a humble Christian now I am so near heaven—eh, Middleton? He! he! You don't like to contradict me. Look at those emeralds. The hasp is broken, but it makes a pretty bracelet. I don't think I'll tell how the hasp got broken—little accident as the lady who wore it gave it to me. Rather brown, isn't it, on one side? But it will come off. No, you need not be afraid of touching it; it isn't wet. He! he! And this crescent. Look at those diamonds! A duchess would be proud of them. I had them from a private soldier. I gave him two rupees for them. Dear me! how the sight of them brings back old times. But I won't leave them out any longer. We must put them away—put them away."

And the glittering mass was gathered up and shoveled back into the old brown bag. He looked into it once with hungry eyes, and then he pulled the string and pushed it over to me. "Take it," he said. "Put it away now. Put it away," he repeated, as I hesitated.

I put the bag into my pocket. He gave a long sigh as he watched it disappear.

"Now what you have got to do with that bag," he said a moment afterward, "is to take it to Ralph Danvers, the second son of Sir George Danvers, of Stoke Moreton, in D——shire. Sir George has got two sons. I have never seen him or his sons, but I don't mean the eldest to have them. He is a spendthrift. They are all for Ralph, who is a steady fellow, and going to marry a nice girl—at least I suppose she is a nice girl. Girls who are going to be married always are nice. Those jewels will sweeten matrimony for Mrs. Ralph, and if she is like other women it will need sweetening. There, now you have got them and that is what you have got to do with them. There is the address written on this card. With my compliments, you perceive. He! he! I don't suppose they will remember who I am."

"Have you no relations?" I asked, for I am always strongly of opinion that property should be bequeathed to relatives, especially near relatives, rather than to entire strangers.

"None," he replied, "not even poor relations. I have no deserving nephew or Scotch cousin. If I had they would be here at this moment, smoothing the pillow of the departing saint and wondering how much they would get. You may make your mind easy on that score."

"Then, who is this Ralph whom you have never seen and to whom you are leaving so much?" I asked, with my usual desire for information.

He glared at me for a moment, and then he turned his face away.

"D—n it! What does it matter, now I'm dying?" he said. And then he added, hoarsely, "I know his mother."

I could not speak, but involuntarily I put out my hand and took his leaden one and held it. He scowled at me, and then the words came out, as if in spite of himself:

"She—if she had married me who knows what might—— But she married Danvers. She called her second son Ralph. My first name is Ralph." Then, with a sudden change of tone, pulling away his hand, "There! now you know all about it! Edifying, isn't it? These deathbed scenes always have an element of interest, haven't they? Good evening"—ringing the bell at his elbow—"I can't say I hope we shall meet again; it would be impolite. No, don't let me keep you. Good-by again."

"Good-by, Sir John," I said, taking his impatient hand and shaking it gently; "God bless you."

"Thankee," grinned the old man with a sardonic chuckle. "If anything could do me good that will, I'm sure. Good-by."

As I breakfasted next morning previously to my departure I could not help reflecting on the different position in which I was now returning to England—as a colonel on long leave—to that in which I had left it many, I do not care to think how many, years ago, the youngest ensign in the regiment.

It was curious to remember that in my youth I had always been considered the fool of the family; most unjustly so considered, when I look back at my quick promotion owing to casualties, and at my long and prosperous career in India, which I cannot but regard as the result of high principles and abilities, to say the least of it, of not the meanest order. On the point of returning to England the trust Sir John had, with his usual shrewdness, reposed in me was an additional proof, if proof were needed, of the confidence I had inspired in him—a confidence which seemed to have ripened suddenly at the end of his life, after many years of hardly concealed mockery and derision. Just as I was finishing my reflections and my breakfast Dickson, one of the last joined subalterns, came in.

"This is very awful," he said, so gravely that I turned to look at him.

"What is awful?"

"Don't you know?" he replied. "Haven't you heard about—Sir John—last night?"

"Dead?" I asked.

He nodded and then he said:

"Murdered in the night. Cathcart heard a noise and went in and stumbled over him on the floor. As he came in he saw the lamp knocked over, and a figure rush out through the veranda. The moon was bright and he saw a man run across a clear space in the moonlight—a tall, slightly built man in native dress, but not a native, Cathcart said; that he would take his oath on by his build. He roused the house, but the man got clean off, of course."

"And Sir John?"

"Sir John was quite dead when Cathcart got back to him. He found him lying on his face. His arms were spread out and his dressing gown was torn as if he had struggled hard. His pockets had been turned inside out, his writing table drawers forced open, the whole room had been ransacked. Yet the old man's gold watch had not been touched, and some money in one of the drawers had not been taken. What on earth is the meaning of it all?" said young Dickson, below his breath. "What was the thief after?"

In a moment the truth flashed across my brain. I put two and two together as quickly as most men, I fancy. The jewels! Some one had got wind of the jewels, which at that moment were reposing on my own person in their old brown bag. Sir John had been only just in time.

"What was he looking for?" continued Dickson, walking up and down. "The old man must have had some paper or other about him that he wanted to get hold of. But what? Cathcart says that nothing whatever has been taken, as far as he can see at present."

I was perfectly silent. It is not every man who would have been so in my place, but I was. I know when to hold my tongue, thank heaven!

Presently the others came in, all full of the same subject, and then suddenly I remembered that it was getting late; and there was a bustle and a leave taking, and I had to post off before I could hear more. Not, however, that there was much more to hear, for everything seemed to be in the greatest confusion, and every species of conjecture was afloat as to the real criminal and the motive for the crime.

I had not much time to think of anything during the first day on board; yet, busy as I was in arranging and rearranging my things, poor Old Sir John never seemed quite absent from my mind. His image, as I had last seen him, constantly rose before me, and the hoarse whisper was forever sounding in my ears, "I'm watched! I know I'm watched!" I could not get him out of my head. I was unable to sleep the first night I was on board, and as the long hours wore on I always seemed to see the pale, searching eyes of the dead man; and above the manifold noises of the steamer and the perpetual lapping of the calm water against my ear came the whisper, "I'm watched! I know I'm watched!"

CHAPTER II.

"They will look lovely, set in gold, as a bracelet on her arm."

I was all right next day. I suppose I had had what women call nerves. I never knew what nerves meant before, because no two women I ever met seemed to have the same kind. If it is slamming a door that upsets one woman's nerves, it may be coming in on tiptoe that will upset another's. You never can tell. But I am sure it was nerves with me that first night; I know I have never felt so queer since. Oh, yes, I have, though—once. I was forgetting; but I have not come to that yet.

We had a splendid passage home. Most of the passengers were in good spirits at the thought of seeing England again, and even the children were not so troublesome as I have known them. I soon made friends with some of the nicest people, for I generally make friends easily. I do not know how I do it, but I always seem to know what people really are at first sight. I always was rather a judge of character.

There was one man on board whom I took a great fancy to from the first. He was a young American, traveling about as Americans do to see the world. I forget where he had come from—though I believe he told me—or why he was going to London; but a nicer young fellow I never met. He was rather simple and unsophisticated, and with less knowledge of the world than any man I ever know; but he did not mind owning to it, and was as grateful as possible for any little hints which, as an older man who had not gone through life with his eyes shut, I was of course able to give him. He was of a shy disposition I could see, and wanted drawing out; but he soon took to me, and in a surprisingly short time we became friends.

He was in the next cabin to mine, and evidently wished so much to have been with me that I tried to get another man to exchange; but he was grumpy about it and I had to give it up, much to young Carr's disappointment. Indeed he was quite silent and morose for a whole day about it, poor fellow. He was a tall, handsome young man, slightly built, with the kind of sallow complexion that women admire, and I wondered at his preferring my company to that of the womankind on board, who were certainly very civil to him.

One evening when I was rallying him on the subject, as we were leaning over the side (for though it was December it was hot enough in the Red Sea to lounge on deck), he told me that he was engaged to be married to a beautiful young American girl. I forgot her name, but I remember he told it me—Dulcima something—but it is of no consequence. I quite understood then. I always can enter into the feelings of others so entirely. I know when I was engaged myself once, long ago, I did not seem to care to talk to any one but her. She did not feel the same about it, which perhaps accounted for her marrying some one else, which was quite a blow to me at the time. But still I could fully enter into young Carr's feelings, especially when he went on to expatiate on her perfections. Nothing, he averred, was too good for her. At last he dropped his voice, and after looking about him in the dusk to make sure he was not overheard he said:

"I have picked up a few stones for her on my travels; a few sapphires of considerable value. I don't care to have it generally known that I have jewels about me, but I don't mind telling you."

"My dear fellow," I replied, laying my hand on his shoulder and sinking my voice to a whisper, "not a soul on board this vessel suspects it, but so have I."

It was too dark for me to see his face, but I felt that he was much impressed by what I had told him.

"Then you will know where I had better keep mine," he said a moment later with his impulsive, boyish confidence. "How fortunate I told you about them. Some are of considerable value, and—and I don't know where to put them that they will be absolutely safe. I never carried about jewels with me before, and I am nervous about losing them, you understand." And he nodded significantly at me. "Now where would you advise me to keep them?"

"On you," I said significantly.

"But where?"

He was simpler than even I could have believed.

"My dear boy," I said, hardly able to refrain from laughing, "do as I do—put them in a bag with a string to it. Put the string around your neck, and wear that bag under your clothes night and day."

"At night as well?" he asked anxiously.

"Of course. You are just as likely to lose them, as you call it, in the night as in the day."

"I am very much obliged to you," he replied. "I will take your advice this very night. I say," he added suddenly, "you would not care to see them, would you? I would not have any one else catch sight of them for a good deal, but I would show them you in a moment. Everyone else is on deck just now, if you would like to come down into my cabin."

I hardly know one stone from another, and never could tell a diamond from paste; but he seemed so anxious to show me what he had that I did not like to refuse.

"By all means," I said. And we went below.

It was very dark in Carr's cabin, and after he had let me in he locked the door carefully before he struck a light. He looked quite pale in the light of the lamp after the red dusk of the warm evening on deck.

"I don't want to have other fellows coming in," he said, in a whisper, nodding at the door.

He stood looking at me for a moment, as if irresolute, and then he suddenly seemed to arrive at some decision, for he pulled a small parcel out of his pocket and began to open it.

They really were not much to look at, though I would not have told him so for worlds. There were a few sapphires—one of a considerable size, but uncut—and some handsome turquoises, but not of perfect color. He turned them over with evident admiration.

"They will look lovely, set in gold, as a bracelet on her arm," he said, softly. He was very much in love, poor fellow! And then he added humbly: "But I dare say they are nothing to yours."

I chuckled to myself at the thought of his astonishment when he should actually behold them; but I only said:

"Would you like to see them, and judge for yourself?"

"Oh, if it is not giving you too much trouble," he exclaimed, gratefully, with shining eyes. "It's very kind of you. I did not like to ask. Have you got them with you?"

I nodded, and proceeded to unbutton my coat.

At that moment a voice was heard shouting down the companion ladder: "Carr! I say, Carr, you are wanted!" and in another moment some one was hammering on the door.

Carr sprang to his feet, looking positively savage.

"Carr!" shouted the voice again. "Come out, I say; you are wanted!"

"Button up your coat," he whispered, scowling suddenly, and with an oath he opened the door.

Poor Carr! He was quite put out, I could see, though he recovered himself in a moment and went off laughing with the man, who had been sent for him to take his part in a rehearsal which had been suddenly resolved on, for theatricals had been brewing for some time and he had promised to act in them. I had not been asked to join, so I saw no more of him that night. The following morning, as I was taking an early turn on deck, he joined me and said, with a smile, as he linked his arm in mine: "I was put out last, wasn't I?"

"But you got over it in a moment," I replied. "I quite admired you; and, after all, you know—some other time."

"No," he said, smiling still, "not some other time! I don't think I will see them—thanks all the same. They might put me out of conceit with what I have picked up for my little girl, which are the best I can afford."

He seemed to have lost all interest in the subject, for he began to talk of England, and of London, about which he appeared to have that kind of vague, half and half knowledge which so often proves misleading to young men newly launched into town life. When he found out, as he soon did, that I was to a certain extent familiar with the metropolis, he began to question me minutely and ended by making me promise to dine with him at the Criterion, of which he had actually never heard, and go with him afterward to the best of the theatres the day after we arrived in London.

He wanted me to go with him the very evening we arrived, but on that point I was firm. My sister Jane, who was living with a hen canary (called Bob, after me, before its sex was known) in a small house in Kensington, would naturally be hurt if I did not spend my first evening in England with her, after an absence of so many years.

Carr was much interested to hear that I had a sister, and asked innumerable questions about her. Was she young and lovely, or was she getting on? Did she live all by herself, and was I going to stay with her for long? Was not Kensington—was that the name of the street?—rather out of the world, etc.?

I was pleased with the interest he took in any particulars about myself and my relations. People so seldom care to hear about the concerns of others. Indeed, I have noticed, as I advance in life, such a general want of interest on the part of my acquaintance in the minutiæ of my personal affairs that of late I have almost ceased to speak of them at any length. Carr, however, who was of what I should call a truly domestic turn of character, showed such genuine pleasure in hearing about myself and my relations that I asked him to call in London in order to make Jane's acquaintance, and accordingly gave him her address, which he took down at once in his note book with evident satisfaction.

Our passage was long, but it proved most uneventful, and except for an occasional dance and the theatricals before mentioned it would have been dull in the extreme. The theatricals certainly were a great success, mainly owing to the splendid acting of young Carr, who became afterward a more special object of favor even than he was before. It was bitterly cold when we landed early in January at Southampton, and my native land seemed to have retired from view behind a thick veil of fog.

We had a wretched journey up to London, packed as tight as sardines in a tin, much to the disgust of Carr, who accompanied me to town, and who, with his usual thoughtfulness, had in vain endeavored to keep the carriage to ourselves by liberal tips to guards and porters. When we at last arrived in London he insisted on getting me a cab and seeing my luggage onto it before he looked after his own at all. It was only when I had given the cabman my sister's address that he finally took his leave, and disappeared among the throng of people who were jostling each other near the luggage vans.

Curiously enough, when I arrived at my destination an odd thing happened. I got out at the green door of 23 Sub-

[TO BE CONTINUED.]